

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing user selectable electronic message action choices and processing, comprising the steps of:

- (a) receiving an electronic message for a client;
- (b) determining if the electronic message matches at least one criteria of a filter, wherein at least one action is associated with the filter; and
- (c) if the electronic message matches the criteria, displaying a graphic associated with the action when the electronic message is viewed at the client and executing the action if the graphic is selected.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step (b) further comprises:

- (b1) adding the action associated with the filter to an action list for the electronic message, if the electronic message matches the criteria.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the adding step (b1) comprises:

- (b1i) receiving a plurality of filters configured for a recipient of the electronic message;
- (b1ii) comparing the electronic message against criteria of each of the plurality of filters;
- (b1iii) for each filter with criteria matching the electronic message, adding an action associated with the filter to an action list for the electronic message; and

(b1iv) placing the electronic message with the action list in the recipient's inbox.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the displaying step (c) comprises:

(c1) inserting computer code into the electronic message if the electronic message matches the criteria, wherein the computer code displays the graphic associated with the action when the electronic message is viewed at the client and executes the action if the graphic is selected.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the inserting step (c1) comprises:

(c1i) receiving from the client a request for the electronic message;
(c1ii) obtaining the electronic message from the recipient's inbox; and
(c1iii) inserting a graphic associated with each action in the action list into the electronic message.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein the displaying step (c) comprises:

(c1) determining that the client is a supported client;
(c2) adding the action list to the electronic message; and
(c3) sending the electronic message to the client.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

(d) receiving a selection of the graphic;
(e) checking for a plug-in associated with the action at the client; and

(f) invoking the plug-in, if the plug-in is found.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

(g) requesting the plug-in from a plug-in server, if the plug-in is not found;

(h) receiving the plug-in from the plug-in server;

(i) installing the received plug-in; and

(j) invoking the plug-in.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

(d) receiving a selection of the graphic;

(e) sending an action request for the action associated with the selected graphic

to a server; and

(f) processing a response to the request from the server.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

(g) receiving the action request by the server;

(h) invoking a plug-in associated with the action; and

(i) sending a response to the action request to the client.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the criteria of the filter are customizable for a recipient.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the action is customizable for a recipient.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step (b) is performed at a mail server.
14. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step (b) is performed at the client.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step (b) is performed at a relay server.
16. The method of claim 1, wherein the client comprises one or more of a group consisting of:
 - a cellular phone;
 - a personal computer;
 - a personal digital assistant; and
 - an image capture device.
17. The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic message comprises a file attachment, wherein the file attachment comprises an image file.
18. A computer readable medium with program instructions for providing user

selectable electronic message action choices and processing, comprising the instructions for:

- (a) receiving an electronic message for a client;
- (b) determining if the electronic message matches at least one criteria of a filter,

wherein at least one action is associated with the filter;

- (c) if the electronic message matches the criteria, displaying a graphic associated with the action when the electronic message is viewed at the client and executing the action if the graphic is selected.

19. The medium of claim 18, wherein the determining instruction (b) further comprises:

- (b1) adding the action associated with the filter to an action list for the electronic message, if the electronic message matches the criteria.

20. The medium of claim 19, wherein the adding instruction (b1) comprises:

- (b1i) receiving a plurality of filters configured for a recipient of the electronic message;

- (b1ii) comparing the electronic message against criteria of each of the plurality of filters;

- (b1iii) for each filter with criteria matching the electronic message, adding an action associated with the filter to an action list for the electronic message; and

- (b1iv) placing the electronic message with the action list in the recipient's inbox.

21. The medium of claim 19, wherein the displaying step (c) comprises:

(c1) inserting computer code into the electronic message if the electronic message matches the criteria, wherein the computer code displays the graphic associated with the action when the electronic message is viewed at the client and executes the action if the graphic is selected.

22. The medium of claim 21, wherein the inserting instruction (c1) comprises:

(c1i) receiving from the client a request for the electronic message;
(c1ii) obtaining the electronic message from the recipient's inbox; and
(c1iii) inserting a graphic associated with each action in the action list into the electronic message.

23. The medium of claim 19, wherein the displaying step (c) comprises:

(c1) determining that the client is a supported client;
(c2) adding the action list to the electronic message; and
(c3) sending the electronic message to the client.

24. The medium of claim 18, further comprising:

(d) receiving a selection of the graphic;
(e) checking for a plug-in associated with the action at the client; and
(f) invoking the plug-in, if the plug-in is found.

25. The medium of claim 24, further comprising:

- (g) requesting the plug-in from a plug-in server, if the plug-in is not found;
- (h) receiving the plug-in from the plug-in server;
- (i) installing the received plug-in; and
- (j) invoking the plug-in.

26. The medium of claim 18, further comprising:

- (d) receiving a selection of the graphic;
- (e) sending an action request for the action associated with the selected graphic

to a server; and

- (f) processing a response to the request from the server.

27. The medium of claim 26, further comprising:

- (g) receiving the action request by the server;
- (h) invoking a plug-in associated with the action; and
- (i) sending a response to the action request to the client.

28. The medium of claim 18, wherein the criteria of the filter are customizable for a recipient.

29. The medium of claim 18, wherein the action is customizable for a recipient.

30. The medium of claim 18, wherein the determining instruction (b) is performed at a mail server.

31. The medium of claim 18, wherein the determining instruction (b) is performed at the client.

32. The medium of claim 18, wherein the determining instruction (b) is performed at a relay server.

33. The medium of claim 18, wherein the client comprises one or more of a group consisting of:

- a cellular phone;
- a personal computer;
- a personal digital assistant; and
- an image capture device.

34. The medium of claim 18, wherein the electronic message comprises a file attachment, wherein the file attachment comprises an image file.

35. A system, comprising:

a storage medium for storing:

a plurality of filters, each filter comprising at least one criteria, and

a plurality of actions, each action capable of being associated with one of the plurality of filters; and

a mail server, wherein the mail server:

receives an electronic message for a client,

determines if the electronic message matches the criteria of one of the plurality of filters, and

if the electronic message matches the criteria of the filter, displaying a graphic associated with the action associated with the matching filter when the electronic message is viewed at the client and executing the action if the graphic is selected.

36. The system of claim 35, further comprising:

a plug-in server; and

a plurality of plug-ins stored in the storage medium, wherein each plug-in is capable of being invoked when one of the plurality of actions is executed.

37. A system, comprising:

a storage medium for storing:

a plurality of filters, each filter comprising at least one criteria, and

a plurality of actions, each action capable of being associated with one of the plurality of filters; and

an electronic mail application, wherein the application:

determines if an electronic message matches the criteria of one of the

plurality of filters, and

if the electronic message matches the criteria, displaying a graphic associated with the action associated with the matching filter when the electronic message is viewed and executing the action if the graphic is selected.

38. The system of claim 37, further comprising:

a plug-in server; and

a plurality of plug-ins stored in the storage medium, wherein each plug-in is capable of being invoked when one of the plurality of actions is executed.